

**DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



**Brian Schweitzer**  
GOVERNOR

**Anna Whiting Sorrell**  
DIRECTOR

**STATE OF MONTANA**

PHONE: (406) 444-4077  
FAX: (406) 444-7743  
www.dphhs.mt.gov/sltc

SENIOR & LONG TERM CARE DIVISION  
PO BOX 4210, 2030 11<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
HELENA, MT 59604-4210

Date: December 7, 2010

TO: Nursing Facility Administrators  
Nursing Facility Admission/Discharge Coordinators  
Nursing Facility MDS Coordinators

FROM: Senior and Long Term Care Division

SUBJECT: **MDS Section Q-Return to Community Information and Local Contact Agencies**

This memo is to provide guidance and direction to nursing facility staff in implementing the Section Q, Return to Community Requirements, of the Minimum Data Set (MDS 3.0) assessment instrument, which went into effect on October 1, 2010.

Section Q is administered to all SNF/NF residents. The changes to the MDS assessment instrument were designed to give SNF/NF residents a voice, increase clinical relevance and accuracy, and increase communication and collaboration between providers of services. In this assessment, residents will be asked directly if they want to talk to someone about returning to the community. Those residents that respond **"Yes"**, they are interested in speaking with someone about the possibility of returning to the community, will be referred to a Local Contact Agency (LCA).

State Medicaid Agencies have designated a State point of contact (POC) for the Section Q implementation that is responsible for coordinating efforts in designating LCAs for nursing facilities. In Montana, the POC is Rick Norine, and he can be contacted at [rnorine@mt.gov](mailto:rnorine@mt.gov) or 406-444-4209.

Each State is required to designate a Local Contact Agency or Agencies where consumers and their families can be referred if they would like more information regarding long term care services and supports that may be available in each community.

Senior and Long Term Care Division staff from the nursing facility program, the community services program and the aging services program, have worked together in determining who would be appropriate LCAs in Montana. We have identified multiple entities that will serve as LCAs, and would be appropriate to make referrals to regarding a "Yes" response in section Q.

They are as follows:

**Regional Program Officers- (RPOs)** are state staff located throughout the state who work with community services, predominantly for individuals that are Medicaid eligible. Contact information for Regional Program Officers in the State has been attached.

**Area Agencies on Aging- (AAAs)** are public or private non-profit agencies, designated by the Aging Services Bureau to address the needs and concerns of older Montanans at the local level. Contact information for Area Agencies on Aging in the State is attached.

**Other Referral Sources** have also been identified, but may not be available in all communities:

Aging and Disability Resource Centers-ADRCs  
Centers for Independent Living-ILCs

**Toll Free Number:**

**1-(800) 551-3191** is also available to field calls for referrals. This number links to the local Area Agency on Aging in the area from which the call is placed.

The level and type of response by a LCA will be on a resident-by-resident basis. These contacts could include face-to-face visits, or telephone contact to screen candidates in determining the specific needs if a community placement is an option. For residents that are not Medicaid eligible, ARDCs, Centers for Independent Living, or Agencies on Aging can still provide mechanisms to identify services that may be available to those residents.

A referral to an LCA does not replace the nursing facility requirement to provide discharge planning and meet those regulatory requirements as they have in the past. The referral should be appropriate to the individuals needs, and only if transition to the community is possible.

We caution facilities and LCAs to guard against raising the expectations of residents or family members of what can happen until all the information can be obtained. Resource availability and eligibility coverage may present barriers to allowing some resident's to return to the community.

To assist in making the referral to a LCA, we have provided several pieces of information that could be helpful to residents and their families. Please find attached:

- **List of Regional Program Officers and their contact information.**
- **List of Area Agencies on Aging and their contact information. Map of Area Agency Coverage.**
- **Community Alternatives Flyer-prepared by Senior and Long Term Care Division.**
- **Brochure on the Montana Aging Services Network.**
- **FAQ (frequently asked questions) on MDS 3.0 prepared by Senior and Long Term Care Division.**

- **Sample brochure developed by CMS “Your Right to get Information About Returning to the Community.”**
- **“Your Discharge Planning Checklist” prepared by CMS.**

Additionally, Senior and Long Term Care Division have developed a **WEBSITE FOR MDS 3.0 SECTION Q**, which includes the above information and has additional links to resources and Local Contact Agency information.

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/services/nursingfacilities/MDS/IndexMDS.shtml>

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has its own web site pertaining to MDS 3.0 SECTION Q. One resource available includes the Q & A document now called “MDS 3.0 Section Q Implementation Solutions.”

[http://www.cms.gov/CommunityServices/10\\_CommunityLivingInitiative.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.cms.gov/CommunityServices/10_CommunityLivingInitiative.asp#TopOfPage)

## **Videos Resources**

<http://www.youtube.com/user/CMSHHSgov>

Available on the new *CMS YouTube Channel* and are listed in the "Downloads" section below, including,

- “Gladys & Linda Return to the Community” – a video that documents two individual perspectives on returning home after a nursing home admission

CC: Regional Program Officers  
Area Agencies on Aging  
Aging Disability Resource Centers  
Independent Living Centers  
Montana Health Care Association  
MHA An Association of Montana Health Care Providers  
State Ombudsman Program  
Quality Assurance Division-DPHHS